

AUSTRALIAN TOURISM GAINS FROM THE CHINESE NEW YEAR



The Australian hotels, tourism and its luxurious retail sector are some of the beneficiaries of the festivities that came with the Chinese New Year.

Well over 80,000 tourists who are mostly of Asian descent, and also constitute a 50% increase in the usual monthly number of tourists, from Hong Kong and China arrived to Australia with one goal in mind - spending more money than they ever did before.

This of course wouldn't have gone unnoticed by Tourism Australia as Leo Seaton, the spokesperson for Tourism Australia, who said that the **total amount of money that is spent by visitors and tourists from China per trip when observed for twelve months starting and ending in September of each year, had gone past the \$4 billion mark in 2012**. This was a 16% increase from the previous year.

He was quick to say that although it was still too early to give a precise effect that the festival is going to bring to Australia's tourism industry, it wouldn't hurt to wait for a "significant boost".

He believes that one should expect nothing less since Chinese love celebrating their New Year Lunar festival and at the same time they are in love with Australia and this combination would definitely lead to a significant boost in tourism.

Brian Walker, the chief executive officer of Retail Doctor Group, said that Australians need to wake up and realize the market that is growing from the ever increasing number of Asian consumers who choose Australia as their main destination. Most of these Asian visitors, he said, are mostly drawn to Australia by Sydney's capital markets.

Airline companies such as China South Airlines and other airlines that ply the route have also added more flights to Australia and China during this period. Some of the routes that have had more flights added include the China-Cairns and the Uluru-Adelaide routes.

The yearly number of tourists visiting Australia for the festival, as noted by Tourism Australia, has slowly and steadily been on the rise in the recent past, but with a notable increase mainly from Chinese tourists. Their number, according to Australia's Bureau of Statistics, had increased to 626,000 in 2012 which was a 16% increase in growth.

Brad Chan, who is the Haymarket's Chamber of Commerce president, said that the Haymarket area had been very busy the previous weekend with both Australians and the Asian tourists flocking the area. **He added that most of the restaurant owners had their premises full with customers while retailers too were not left behind as their registered good sales.**

Brad said that he believes that the Haymarket area is going to remain very busy in the coming several weeks with the increase in the number of visitors who come for the celebrations each year for the last decade. He added that the steady growth of visitors for the festival in the last 5 to 10

years can also be directly linked to the constant investment that the City of Sydney puts towards these celebrations.

Hotels such as Quay West, Ibis, Novotel and The Sofitel that are owned by Accor, have also noted a notable increase in the number of Chinese customers, which stands close to 20%, in the last year alone.

In order to provide better services to its new customers, Accor has invested in Mandarin welcome kits, Chinese television channels, newspapers, and electrical adaptors and also at the same time taken their time to train its staff concerning the cultural differences.

With the tripling in the number of Chinese visitors to Australia over the past decade, there is no doubt as to why Chinese visitors come second in the total number of visitors that come to Australia and first in as far as the number of Australian visitors that is growing fast is concerned.

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